

Message Text

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15

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 DHA-02

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R 181705Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4542

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUENOS AIRES 1103

E.O. 11652: GDS

SUBJECT: GOA MOVES AGAINST PRESS

1. LATE FRIDAY EVENING (FEB. 13) GOA MOVED TO CLOSE INFLUENTIAL DAILY, LA OPINION. IN DECREE ISSUED CLOSING PAPER FOR 10 DAYS, GOA CHARGED THAT PAPER HAD "DISTORTED THE NEWS AND CONTRIBUTED TO A CLIMATE OF INSTABILITY IN THE COUNTRY."

2. DESPITE FACT THAT LA OPINION HAS LONG BEEN AT ODDS WITH GOVT AND HAS SEVERAL TIMES IN PAST COME CLOSE TO BEING CLOSED DOWN, TIMING OF GOVT CLOSURE ORDER CAUGHT MOST OBSERVERS, INCLUDING THOSE AT LAOPINION, BY SURPRISE. IN RECENT WEEKS, PAPER HAS CONTINUED ITS EXPOSES OF GOVT CORRUPTION AND HAS CHARGED THE ADMINISTRATION WITH GROSS POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC MISMANAGEMENT. HOWEVER, TWO ARTICLES WHICH, FROM GOVT POINT OF VIEW REQUIRED PAPER TO BE CLOSED, WERE PUBLISHED IN THURS. EDITION: FIRST ARTICLE CLAIMED THAT MRS. PERON HAD RECENTLY CALLED IN UNION LEADERS CASILDO HERRERAS AND LORENZO MIGUEL AND GIVEN THEM LEATHER BOUND COPIES OF DOSSIERS THAT DOCUMENTED IN DETAIL THEIR FINANCIAL, SEXUAL AND POLITICAL MISDEEDS. ACCORDING TO ARTICLE THEY RETURNED THE FAVOR TO HER LAST WEEK. SECOND PIECE, A FRONT PAGE EDITORIAL, NOTED THAT THE "CLIQUE" AROUND MRS. PERON CONTINUED TO PLAY PETTY POLITICS WITH COUNTRY'S FUTURE WHILE MILITARY MEN TAKING RESPONSIBLE POLITICAL POSITIONS AND DYING AT THE HANDS
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OF GUERILLA TERRORISTS.

3. IN FURTHER MOVE AGAINST PRESS, GOVT ON FEB. 16 ENDED
POPULAR AND CONTROVERSIAL TALK SHOW, TIEMPO NUEVO,
HOSTED BY WELL KNOWN ARGENTINE NEWSMAN, BERNARDO NEUSTADT.
THE PROGRAM IN RECENT MONTHS HAS BEEN VIRTUALLY ONLY
TV PROGRAM WHICH HAS DEALT WITH CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES
FACING COUNTRY IN SERIOUS MANNER.

4. COMMENT: BOTH ACTS ARE SEEN BY POLITICAL OBSERVERS
AS DESPERATION MOVES ON PART OF GOVT THAT SEES ITSELF
BESET ON ALL SIDES WITH ENEMIES BOTH REAL AND IMAGINED.
ATTACK ON PRESS WILL IN FACT ONLY GARNER FURTHER ILL WILL
FOR GOVERNMENT.
HILL

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